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THE PEOPLE OF EUROPE AND THE GREAT WAR

By JANE ADDAMS

EVERYWHERE on our pilgrimage we heard the same phrases given as the causes and as the reasons for the war. Each of the warring nations is fighting under the impulse of self-defense. Each of the warring nations is fighting to preserve its own traditions and its own ideals from those who would come in to disturb and destroy those high traditions and those ideals. And from one tongue or another it was translated—as most of the men in the foreign offices had to speak English, they translated it into English—and one heard the identical phrases, and going as rapidly as we did from one country to another, it was to me always a striking experience. I almost knew what to expect, what phrases were coming next, after a foreign minister had begun. We were received in each of the capitals, in London, in Berlin, in Vienna, in Budapest, in Rome, in Havre—where the Belgium government is now established—in Switzerland and Holland, although they were neutral, by the minister of foreign affairs, and by the chancellor or prime minister, and in all of the countries we saw members of parliament and other men who are responsible for governmental policies.

In practically all of the foreign offices, and especially in two of the foreign offices which I supposed to be leading, one on one side, and one on the other side of this conflict, the men said, again in very similar phrases, that a nation at war cannot make negotiations; that a nation at war cannot even express a willingness to receive negotiations, for if it does either, the enemy will at once construe it as a symptom of weakness, and under the terms which are made the side which first suggested negotiations will suffer as being considered the side that was weaker and was suing for peace. But they said in all of these different foreign offices that if some other power will present propositions, if neutral peoples, however they may be gotten together, peoples who will command the respect of the foreign offices to whom their propositions are represented, if a small group is willing to get together to study the situation seriously and to make propositions, one, two, three, even though they are turned down over and over again—they do not say turned down in diplomatic circles, but perhaps you will permit that free phraseology—even if it goes up to ten, until some basis is found upon which negotiations might commence, there is none of the warring nations that would not be glad to receive such service. That came to us unequivocally.

In all of the great countries which we visited, although the people are tremendously united within the countries at the present moment, still they wish the war to cease, or they are going to divide into parties, one party to oppose the other. While they are united in this tremendous national consciousness, there are in every single country two general lines of approach. One is through the military party, which believes that the matter can be settled only upon a military basis, and the other is through a civil party, which very much deprecates this exaltation of militarism, which says that the

longer the war goes on the more the military authorities will be established, as censors of the press are established in all sorts of places which they ordinarily did not occupy; the longer the war goes on, the more the military power is breaking down all the safeguards of civil life and of civil government, and that consequently it will be harder for civil life and for the rights of civil life to resuscitate themselves and regain their place over the rights and power of the military. And that goes on through the mere continuation of the war, and the military becomes more strongly intrenched in these countries every month, and the longer the war goes on, and the more desperately the people cling to their armies for their salvation, the more absolute are the power and the glory of that army. And the people, who represent the civil view of life, in the midst of their patriotic fervor, in the midst of their devotion to the army, see that and long for some other form of settlement, for some other form of approach to this terribly confused situation, long for it in each succeeding month more than they did in the month before.

And one can only say as one goes from one country to another, one can only say for oneself, and say it to the citizens as one has opportunity, that if this war is ever to be settled through negotiations, and some time it must be—heaven knows when, but some time men must stop fighting and return to their normal existence—one says to those men, Why not begin now before the military becomes even further entrenched? Why not begin now when you still have enough power to hold them to their own statements, to hold them to their own purposes, and not allow them to rule and control the absolute destinies of the nation.

I am quite aware that in every country we met, broadly speaking, the civil people and not the military people. I am quite aware that it was natural for us to see the pacifists, if you please—although they are hardly known under that name—it was more natural for us to meet and know the people who were on that side of life, instead of those on the military side of life. But because we did meet dozens of them, I am willing to believe that there must be many more of the same type of mind in every country, quite as loyal as the military people, quite as eager for the growth and development of their own ideals and their own standard of living, but believing with all their hearts that the military message is a wrong message and cannot in the end establish those things which are so dear to their hearts.

AN OLD MAN'S WAR

Another thing which seems to me very striking is this: in each of the warring nations there is this point of similarity—generally speaking, we heard it everywhere—that this was an old man's war; that the young men who were dying, the young men who were doing the fighting, were not the men who wanted the war, and were not the men who believed in the war; that somewhere, in Church and State, somewhere in the high places of society,

elderly people, the middle-aged people, had established themselves and had convinced themselves that this was a righteous war, that this war must be fought out, and, as a young man put it, in a certain country, "and we young fellows have to do the fighting."

This is a terrible indictment, and I admit that I cannot substantiate it, I can only give it to you as an impression, but I should like to bring one or two details before you to back it up, so to speak. I thought that I should not mention the word "German" or the word "Allies," but perhaps if I give an example from Germany and then an example from the Allies, I will not get into trouble.

We met a young German in Switzerland. He had been in the trenches for three months and a half. He had been wounded in the lungs and had been sent to Switzerland to be cured. A physician, I think, would hardly say that he was going to be cured. But he thought he was being cured, and he was speaking his mind before he went back to the trenches. He was, I suppose, what one would call a fine young man, but not an exceptional young man. He had had a gymnasium education. He had been in business with his father, had traveled in South Africa, had traveled in France, England, and Holland, in the line of business, and had come to know men, as he said, as "menschen." Good "menschen" might be found in every land. And now here he was, at twenty-eight, facing death, because he was quite sure when he went back to the trenches death awaited him. But this is what he said: never during that three months and a half had he once shot his gun in a way that could possibly hit another man; nothing in the world could make him kill another man. He could be ordered into the trenches; he could be ordered to go through the motions, but the final act was in his own hands and with his own conscience. And he said, "My brother is an officer"—he gave the name of his brother; he gave the name of his rank; he wasn't concealing anything; he was quite too near death's door to have any shifting and concealing—"he never shoots anything; he never shoots in a way that will kill. And I know dozens and dozens of young men who do not."

We had a list given to us by the woman at the head of a hospital in one German city of five young Germans who had been cured and were ready to be sent back to the trenches who had committed suicide, not because they were afraid of being killed, but because they were afraid they might be put into a position where they would have to kill some one else.

Now, I give my testimony from England, in order to be fair and square. This was published in the Cambridge Magazine at Cambridge University. It was written by a young man who had gone from Cambridge. I didn't go to Cambridge, but I did go to Oxford. The universities are almost depleted of young men. The great majority of them have gone into the war. Here is what this young man wrote: "The greatest trial that this war has brought is that it has released the old men from all restraining influences, and has let them loose upon the world. The city editors, the retired majors, the amazons"—women are included, you see—"and last, but not least, the venerable archdeacons have never been so free from restraint. Just when the younger generation was beginning to take its share in the affairs of the world this war has come to silence us, permanently or

temporarily as the case may be. Meanwhile the old men are having field days of their own. In our name and for our sakes, as they imagine, they are doing their very utmost, it would seem, to perpetuate by their appeals to hate, to intolerance, and revenge, those very follies which have produced the present conflict."

One of the leading men of Europe, whose name you would instantly recognize if I felt at liberty to give it, said, "If this war could have been postponed for ten years, perhaps," he said, "I will be safe and say twenty years, war would have been impossible in Europe, because of the tremendous revolt against it in the schools and the universities."

I am quite sure when I say that, that it is a partial view. I am quite sure that there are thousands of young men in the trenches feeling that they are performing the highest possible duties. I am quite sure that the spirit of righteousness is in the hearts of most of them, at least of many of them. But I am also sure that throughout there are to be found these other men who are doing violence to the highest teachings they know. It seemed to me at times as if the difference between the older generation and the new was something which was apprehended dimly in each country; that the older men believed more in abstractions, shall I say; that when they talked of patriotism, when they used certain words, certain theological or nationalistic words, these meant more to them than they did to the young men; that the young men took life much more from the point of view of experience. They were much more pragmatic, I suppose I could have said, in Boston; I don't know how well it will go in New York; they took life much more empirically, and when they went to the trenches and tested it out, they concluded that it did not pay, that it was not what they wanted to do with their lives.

I saw an old Quaker in England who said, "My sons are not fighting, they are sweeping mines." They allow themselves to sweep mines, but they do not allow themselves to fire mines. "My sons are doing this, that, and the other thing." It is strange to me, because they never went to Quaker meetings, but they are awfully keen now on being consistent." Now, there you are. I think it was the older generation, the difference again between the older and the new. This again may be a superficial impression, but such as it is, we had it in every single country, one after the other.

THE WOMEN AND WAR

The belief that a woman is against war simply and only because she is a woman and not a man, of course, does not hold. In every country there are many, many women who believe that the war is inevitable and righteous, and that the highest possible service is being performed by their sons who go into the army, just as there are thousands of men believing that in every country. The majority of women and men doubtless believe that. But the women do have a sort of pang about it. Let us take the case of an artist, an artist who was in an artillery corps, let us say, and was commanded to fire upon a wonderful thing, say St. Mark's at Venice, or the Dome at Florence, or any other great architectural and beautiful thing. I am sure he would have just a little more compunction than the man who had never given himself to creating beauty and did not know the cost of it. And there is certainly that deterrent on the part of

the women who have nurtured these soldiers from the time they were little things, who brought them into the world, and brought them up to the age of fighting, and then see them destroyed. That curious revolt comes out again and again, even in the women who are most patriotic, and who say, "I have five sons and a son-in-law in the trenches. I wish I had more sons to give." Even those women, when they are taken off their guard, give a certain protest, a certain plaint against the whole situation which very few men, I think, are able to formulate.

Now, what is it that these women do in the hospitals? They nurse the men back to health and send them to the trenches, and the soldiers say to them, "You are so good to us when we are wounded; you do everything in the world to make life possible and to restore us; why do you not have a little pity for us when we are in the trenches; why do you not put forth a little of this same effort and this same tenderness to see what might be done to pull us out of those miserable places?" That testimony came to us, not from the nurses of one country, and not from the nurses who were taking care of the soldiers on one side, but from those who were taking care of them upon every side. And it seems to make it quite clear that, whether we are able to recognize it or not, there has grown up a generation in Europe, as there has doubtless grown up a generation in America, who have revolted against war. It is a God they know not of, and they are not willing to serve him, because all of their inmost sensibilities and the training upon which their highest ideals depend revolt against the whole situation.

NEED OF TRAINED INTERNATIONAL THINKERS

The law is the least international thing we have. We have an international body of science. A man takes the knowledge of the science to which he is devoted, and deals with that knowledge, and he doesn't ask whether it was gathered together by Englishmen or Germans. We have an international postal system, a tremendous international commerce, and a tremendous international finance—internationalism in all sorts of fields. But the law lags behind, and perhaps will lag behind for a long time, just as many of our most settled customs have never been embodied in law at all. If men could be brought together who had international experience, who had had it so long and so unconsciously that they had come to think not in nationalistic terms, but in the terms of the generation in which they were living, whether concerning business or labor or any other thing which has become so tremendously international, if they could be brought together and could be asked to try to put the very best mind they had, not as they represented one country or another, but as they represented human life and human experience as it has been lived during the last ten years in Europe, upon the question of what has really brought about this situation—I believe if men with that temper, and that experience, and that sort of understanding of life were to begin to make propositions to the various governments which would not placate the claims of one government and set it over against the claims of another government, but would look at the situation from a humane standpoint, I am quite sure, I say from the knowledge of dozens of men in all of the countries who talk about the situation, that that sort of

negotiation would be received. That does not seem an impossible thing, does it?

TEMPER WORKED UP BY THE WAR

Perhaps the most shocking impression left upon one's mind is this, that in the various countries the temper necessary for continuing the war is worked up and fed largely by the things which have occurred in the war itself. Germany has done this, the Allies have done that, somebody else tried to do this, and we foiled them by doing that, and what awful people they are, and they must therefore be crushed. Now I submit that any, shall I say plain mother, any peasant woman who found two children fighting, not for any cause which they stated, but because he did that and I did this, and therefore he did that to me, that such a woman would say: That can't go on; that leads to nothing but continued hatred and quarreling? Let us say that there are two gangs of boys in a boys' club who are fighting. Yes, we did this because the other fellows did that. You would simply have to say: "I won't go into the rights and wrongs of this; this thing must stop, because it leads nowhere and gets you nowhere." And let us go on with larger groups. We all know the strikes that have gone on for weeks with the original cause quite lost sight of. I submit that something of the same sort is happening in Europe now. They are going on because of the things which have been done in the war, and that certainly is a very curious reason for continuing the war. And what it needs, it seems to many of us, is a certain touch of human nature. The human nature in the trenches would be healed over, the kindly people in the various countries would not support the war longer, and foreign officers themselves would resume their own business, that of negotiation versus that of military affairs, if the thing could be released instead of being fed and kept at the boiling pitch as it is all the time by outrages here and there and somewhere else.

WORD PEACE INTOLERABLE

I could go on and tell you many things which we saw. We spoke with Cardinals. The Pope himself gave us an audience of half an hour. Those are men of religious responsibility, men who feel keenly what has happened in Europe. And yet there they all are apparently powerless to do the one thing which might end it. We did not talk peace as we went about; it would merely confuse the issue; but isn't it hideous that whole nations find the word peace intolerable? We said, why not see what can be done to arrive at some way of coming together to discover what might be done in place of the settlement which is now being fought out by military processes? And that was as far as we were able to go with clearness and safety, and upon that platform we were met with the greatest courtesy; it was to my mind more than courtesy, it was indeed as though we brought a breath of fresh air, some one coming in at last to talk of something that was not of war. We went into the room of one of the prime ministers of Europe—and I never have a great deal of self-confidence, I am never so dead sure I am doing the right thing, and I said to him, "This probably seems to you very foolish, to have women going about in this way," and he said, "Foolish? Not at all. These are the first sensible words that have been uttered in this room for ten months." He said, "That

door opens from time to time, and people come in and say, 'Mr. Minister, we must have more men, we must have more ammunition, we must have more money. We cannot go on with this war without more of something else,' and he continued: "At last that door opens and two people walk in and say, 'Mr. Minister, could not negotiations be begun?'" After all, I may not represent his country very worthily, but he is an officer of the government in a high place, and that is what he said. And there are other testimonials of the same sort from all kinds of people in office, and they are part of the peoples who are at war and unable to speak for themselves.

HUMAN NATURE WILL REASSERT ITSELF

The young men in these various countries say of the bayonet charges: "That is what we cannot think of." You know, of course, that all of the countries make their men practically drunk before they can get them to charge; that they have a regular formula in Germany; that they give them rum in England and absinthe in France. They all have to give them the "dope" before the bayonet charge is possible. Think of that. No one knows who is responsible. All the nations are responsible, and they indict themselves. But in the end human nature must reassert itself. The old elements of human understanding and human kindness must come to the fore, and then it may well be that they will reproach the neutral nations and will say: "What was the matter with the rest of the world that they kept quiet while this hor-

rible thing was happening, that men for a moment had lost their senses in this fanaticism of national feeling all over Europe." They may well say, "You were far enough away from it not to share in it, and yet you wavered until we had lost the flower of the youth of all Europe." That is what they said in various tongues and according to their various temperaments, and that is what enables them to fight for their countries when they are at war, believing as they did in the causes for which they were fighting. The people say, "We do not want this war." They say that the governments are making this war, and the governments say, "We do not want this war. We will be grateful to anybody who will help us stop it." We did not reach the military offices, but we did talk to a few military men, and we talked to some of them who said that they were sick to death of this war, and I have no doubt there were many others who, if they spoke freely, would say the same thing. And without abandoning their causes, and without lowering, if you please, the real quality of their patriotism, whatever it is which these various nations want, the women's resolutions said to them, and we said it to them as long as they permitted us to talk, "Whatever it is you want, and whatever it is you feel you ought to have with honor, why in the world can't you submit your case to a tribunal of fair-minded men? If your cause is as good as you say it is, or you are sure it is, certainly those men will find the righteousness which adheres within it." And they all say that if the right medium can be found the case will be submitted.

A CONFERENCE OF NEUTRAL STATES

AT THE meeting of the Board of Directors of the American Peace Society December last a resolution was adopted earnestly recommending to the President of the United States that he call a conference of neutral powers to consider such questions as neutral rights during the present war, the extension of good offices, and the lessening of the chances of future wars. Many similar suggestions have been made from time to time from various quarters. Miss Jane Addams, returning from Europe, urges the importance of such a conference.

The Hon. Elihu Root on the last day of May, 1907, offered his instructions to the American delegates to the Second Hague Conference. Secretary Root pointed out that the clause of the program relating to the rights and duties of neutrals is of very great importance. He called attention to the necessity for establishing provisions which tend to prevent disagreements between nations, which tend to dispose of disagreements without recourse to war, which tend to preserve the rights and interests of neutrals, and finally which tend to mitigate the evils of war to belligerents. He added further:

"The relative importance of these classes of provisions should always be kept in mind. No rules should be adopted for the purpose of mitigating the evils of war to belligerents which will tend strongly to destroy the rights of neutrals, and no rules should be adopted regarding the rights of neutrals which will tend strongly to bring about war. It is of the highest importance that not only the rights, but the duties of neutrals, shall be most clearly and distinctly defined and understood, not

only because the evils which belligerent nations bring upon themselves ought not to be allowed to spread to their peaceful neighbors and inflict unnecessary injury upon the rest of mankind, but because misunderstandings regarding the rights and duties of neutrals constantly tend to involve them in controversy with one or the other belligerent."

We are now in receipt of a statement from Dr. Charles H. Levermore, of the World Peace Foundation, referring to the same matters. Dr. Levermore's views are so pertinent that we print them in full:

DR. LEVERMORE'S STATEMENT

"The sinking of the *Lusitania* and other similar events have clearly demonstrated a constant conflict between the claims of belligerents and the rights of neutrals.

"That conflict implies an ever-increasing danger that each neutral State, attempting to defend its right singly instead of in concert, may be drawn into the struggle. If the violation of neutral rights continues, an irresistible demand for strong action will be inevitable. As an alternative to violent measures, the World Peace Foundation proposes the prompt convocation of a conference of neutral nations as the most practicable and effective step toward the maintenance of neutral rights and the betterment of international relations.

"Such a conference of the non-belligerents has been needed since the war began. It is needed more with every day that the war continues. It should consider and promote the proper definition and defense of the